

# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch

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SIXTY-FIFTH YEAR NO. 1

MAY 8, 2025



**LOCK AND LOAD** Airmen with the 921st Contingency Response Squadron practice firing a M-240 machine gun at Amedee Army Airfield, Herlong, Calif., April 14, 2025. Over 10 days, the 921st CRS participated in exercise Dragon Spark as part of a series of training exercises to qualify them on their deployment readiness. U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Cassidy Fisher

## HONORING OUR OWN THROUGHOUT GOLD STAR AWARENESS MONTH

MCCS MIRAMAR - “Honoring Our Own” is a phrase that refers to showing respect, gratitude, and support for those who are part of a specific community. In respect to Gold Star Awareness Month, it specifically refers to honoring the lives of the service members who died while on active duty, as well as acknowledging the sacrifices of their families.

The surviving family members of these service members

carry an immeasurable weight. The emotional and personal toll of losing a loved one in service is carried long after the flags are folded.

It’s essential that there are support systems in place for surviving families to lean on, some to provide support on benefits/entitlements, help them remain connected to the military, and most importantly, honor their beloved Marine.



Photo courtesy of Marine Corps Community Services

The United States Marine Corps (USMC) Long Term Assistance Program (LTAP) is a permanent resource for the next of kin, ensuring they receive sustained, quality assistance from the Marine Corps.

LTAP was established to provide outreach and assistance to Marine families in need of support with residual issues generally associated with the receipt of death benefits and entitlements. The program continues to evolve to facilitate the family’s lifelong connectedness with the Marine Corps and other surviving family members, should they desire to participate.

LTAP aims to meet the surviving family members where they are in their grief journey. LTAP hopes to continue to connect with the surviving USMC

family members through yearly remembrance outreach, events using local resources/groups, and seminars and ceremonies that support military surviving families.

Gold Star Awareness Month is a time to stop and remember the cost of freedom, and to honor the unwavering commitment of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and their families who continue to carry on their legacy.

To our surviving family members, your resilience and strength in the case of such a profound loss is truly inspiring. If you have any questions, reach out to USMC LTAP by calling 866-210-3421, option 2, or e-mail [smb\\_LTAP@usmc.mil](mailto:smb_LTAP@usmc.mil).

At southern border

## SecDef visits newly created National Defense Area

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth visited the newly created New Mexico National Defense Area recently to meet with service members assigned to Joint Task Force Southern Border.

“This is Department of Defense property,” Hegseth said. “Any illegal [attempt] to enter that zone is entering a military base — a federally protected area. You will be detained. You will be interdicted by U.S. troops and border patrol working together.”

Hegseth held a sign in English and Spanish indicating the property’s protected status. The signs state that the area is under U.S. military jurisdiction and warn that trespassers will be detained.

“You’ve got signs like this one all across the border wall facing into Mexico — clear English, clear Spanish,” he said.

Millions of people crossed the U.S.-Mexico border over the past four years, Hegseth said. Since January, the department has stepped up efforts to curb illegal crossings.

Initial deployments earlier this year included 1,600 active-duty

Marines and Soldiers joining the 2,500 reservists who had already been mobilized.

In early March, the department sent a Stryker brigade combat team and a general support aviation battalion to the southwestern border to accelerate President Donald J. Trump’s directive to bolster military support in securing the border.

Those units were equipped with wheeled vehicles and aviation assets to support mobility and surveillance. In late March, service members assigned to JTF-SB were authorized to conduct patrols — a shift from the previously static role of detection and monitoring. Last week, the Defense Department assumed jurisdiction from the Department of the Interior over 109,651 acres of federal land along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The area was officially designated the “New Mexico National Defense Area,” April 18, 2025, following a general order signed by the Secretary of the Army to make that NDA part of the existing Fort Huachuca, an Army installation in nearby Arizona. According to the DOI, the agreement for the land transfer is three years.

## MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

### Oceanside’s ‘Operation Appreciation’ will celebrate military on Armed Forces Day

Oceanside is gearing up for its annual Armed Forces Day Operation Appreciation. On Saturday, May 17, the Oceanside Chamber will bring the community together to provide a day of recognition for active-duty military stationed on Camp Pendleton and nearby military bases.

### Naval Medical Center San Diego receives Leapfrog’s highest safety grade

FALLS CHURCH, Va. - The Defense Health Agency announced that 16 military hospitals, including Naval Medical Center San Diego, received an “A” rating in the latest Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade assessment for Spring 2025. These high grades reflect the DHA’s ongoing dedication to transparency and providing high-quality care to service members and their families. The Leapfrog Group is a national, independent organization focused on health care quality. The organization evaluates hospitals on a wide range of safety measures, including errors, injuries, and infections. Leapfrog’s grading system uses up to 22 evidence-based measures of patient safety.

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# Navy proves sea-based hypersonic launch approach

by David Vergun, DOD News  
The Defense Department conducted a successful flight test of a conventional hypersonic missile launched from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Fla.

The test marked the first launch of the Conventional Prompt Strike capability, using the Navy's cold-gas launch approach that will be used in Navy sea-based platform hypersonics.

"The cold-gas approach allows the Navy to eject the missile from the platform and achieve a safe distance above the ship prior to first-stage ignition," said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe Jr., director of SSP, which is the lead designer of the common hypersonic missile.

"This technical achievement brings [the Navy's Strategic Systems Programs] one step closer to fulfilling our role of providing a safe and reliable hypersonic capability to our Navy," he said.

"The speed, range and survivability of hypersonic weapons are key to integrated deterrence for America," said Navy Secretary John Phelan. "When fielded, Conventional Prompt Strike will deliver unmatched capabilities to our warfighters."

This was the next step in the Navy's flight test of the common All Up Round, which is being developed in partnership with the Army's Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office. In 2024, the programs completed two additional end-to-end flight tests of the AUR that will be fielded to both services.

The CPS program has been planning and executing engineering and test efforts to prepare for the first Navy fielding aboard guided missile destroyer USS Zumwalt.

Using an in-air launch test facility, the program conducted an extensive test campaign to validate the launch approach prior to the completion of this flight test.



Navy Strategic Systems Programs conducts a cold-gas launch of a conventional hypersonic missile on the path to Navy fielding in Cape Canaveral, Fla. U.S. Navy photo

Information gathered from this test will inform the continued development and production of the AUR and the first use of this cold-gas launch approach on a surface ship platform.

The rapid development and

demonstration of conventional sea-based hypersonic strike weapon systems supports the department's ability to deter, and if necessary, defeat potential strategic competitors. The range, accuracy, lethality and survivability of hypersonics is a

significant leap ahead in U.S. conventional strike capabilities, complementing existing capabilities and enabling the U.S. to defeat adversary high-end capabilities, according to a department news release May 1.

## national military



**GIDDYUP** A Soldier with 1st Infantry Division's Commanding General's Mounted Color Guard explores Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, on May 1, 2025. For the first time, a U.S. Army infantry division performed during the Kentucky Derby in celebration of the Army's upcoming 250th anniversary. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tyler Selige



**THE COAST IS CLEAR** Defenders assigned to the 52nd Security Forces Squadron respond to a simulated opposition force during Exercise Swift Saber 25 at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, April 25, 2025. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Albert Morel



**THE RANGER WAY** Army Rangers, assigned to 5th Ranger Training Battalion, conduct a hand to hand combat demonstration during the 5th RTB Open House at Camp Frank D. Merrill, Dahlonaga, Ga., April 25, 2025. U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st Class Austin Berner

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# Sexual assault prevention, response key contributors to military readiness

by Matthew Olay DOD News

The Defense Department’s annual report on sexual assault in the military for fiscal year 2024 shows a clear connection between sexual violence and impacts on readiness in the uniformed services, DOD’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office’s senior leader said May 1.

“[DOD] remains committed to sexual assault prevention and response, and the data that we’ve shown you in this year’s report provides clear evidence of the [connection between] sexual assault to readiness,” Nathan W. Galbreath, SAPRO director, told the media during a roundtable briefing.

The Defense Department is required to submit an annual report on sexual assault in the military to Congress under the fiscal year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act.

The report includes the number of sexual assaults reported to DOD for the fiscal year, military justice outcomes of cases resolved that year, and the number of reports of sexual harassment, domestic sexual abuse and child sexual abuse.

Galbreath explained that sexual assaults are less common in healthy, well-functioning military units and that service members who experience sexual assault tend to leave

national security objectives,” Galbreath said.

One way DOD sought to reduce incidents of sexual assault in FY 2024 was by

“We had over one million responses to the annual command climate assessment survey, which provides a range of leading indicators for assault, harassment, suicide, readiness and retention,” she said.

Once the data is collected, it goes directly to unit commanders so that they can take action. The department’s integrated primary prevention workforce facilitates this process. In early 2025, ap

proximately 1,400 of these local experts were in place to help military leaders interpret the results and take preventative action to stop sexual assault events before they occur, Tharp said.

“These experts are critical to maintaining mission readiness,” she said.

Readiness is one of five priorities Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth outlined in his Jan. 25,

2025, message to the force. The others are lethality, meritocracy, accountability and standards.

“Countering sexual assault is vital to maintaining the high standards of our military services and strengthening our fighting force,” Galbreath said, adding that DOD will continue supporting prevention and response efforts aimed at fortifying unit cohesion and emphasizing accountability and readiness.



**Marine Corps Cpl. Alex Perez, a manpower clerk at Marine Corps Recruiting Command G-1, wears a sexual assault prevention and response shirt to support the command’s Denim Day at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., April 30. U. S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Brenna Ritchie**

## Guardsmen battle New Jersey wildfire with Black Hawks

New Jersey National Guardsmen assisted the New Jersey Forest Fire Service and other state agencies to fight the Ocean County wildfires.

Members of the 1st Battalion, 150th Assault Helicopter Regiment, New Jersey Army National Guard, used UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters equipped with a bucket firefighting system to combat the wildfires.



### PHOTO CAPTION:

**Army 1st Sgt. Timothy Witts uses a bucket firefighting system from a UH-60M Black Hawk to combat wildfires in Ocean County, N.J., April 28. U. S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Michael Schwenk**

DoD

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**Top 5**

- SecDef wields axe to brass, HQs, formations to fashion leaner Army
- Lohmeier, nominee for under SECAF, defends record in confirmation hearing
- Space Force Special Operations Command is on its way
- F-35C pilot earns Marine Corps’ top aviator award following Yemen strikes
- Service leaders laud quality-of-life improvements, but concerns linger

**Army**

- Army looking to cancel legacy systems, pursue dual-use capabilities
- Rangers take top spot at Best Sapper Competition for fourth Army-wide win this year
- Fort Campbell Soldier sentenced to one year in prison for overdose death of fellow soldier
- Army plans for a potential parade on Trump’s birthday call for 6,600 soldiers, AP learns

**Navy**

- Turning a Navy carrier isn’t enough to cause a jet to fall into the sea, U.S. defense official says
- Submarine designers in Connecticut say they’ll strike on May 18 if contract deal isn’t reached
- Navy saw small increase in sexual assault reports in FY 2024, according to DoD report
- Navy secretary pushes U.S.-allied shipbuilding ties during stop in South Korea

**Marines**

- Top Marine calls for affordable, lethal and autonomous systems
- Marine AH-1Z attack helicopter’s mystery missiles identified
- Marines undergo ‘big cultural shift’ in hopes of more flexible budget
- Commandant says Marines should have a say in whether they change duty stations
- Marine MV-22 Ospreys won’t get tanker capability to refuel F-35Bs anytime soon
- Marines’ top goal: 3 amphibious ready groups at sea

**Air Force**

- Air Force starts ground testing Anduril collaborative combat aircraft
- Air Force picks Beale to host CCA drone wingmen ‘aircraft readiness unit,’ begins ground testing
- Second ‘Super Squadron’ of F-16s marks strategic shift for Air Force in South Korea

**Coast Guard**

- Bollinger approved to start full construction of First Polar Security Cutter

## Hegseth says deterring China important for hemispheric security

by **David Vergun, DOD News**

China poses a threat to people and peace in the region, said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who hosted an enhanced honor cordon and meeting, welcoming Peruvian Defense Minister Walter Astudillo and Peruvian Foreign Affairs Minister Elmer Schialer to the Pentagon May 5.

“Beijing is investing and operating in the region for unfair

economic gain, and together, in order to prevent conflict, we need to robustly deter China’s potential threats in the hemisphere. So we look forward to being partners with you in that regard,” Hegseth said.

The United States is grateful for Peru’s partnership in working to achieve peace through strength, the secretary said.

“Putting America first also

means we’re putting the Americas first,” he said.

The U.S. and Peru share a lot of the same challenges and common threats that require a very serious response, he said.

“We’re making progress on things like trafficking and migration, violent criminal enterprises, folks that are threatening and brutalizing our communities,” Hegseth said.

The secretary said he’s hoping to attend the Conference of Defense Ministers in the Americas next year, which Peru is hosting.

Astudillo said Peru and other Latin American nations, like the U.S., face problems that affect security and development such as migration, drug trafficking and other crimes.

That is why all the countries of the hemisphere need to come together to effectively respond to these transnational problems, he said.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Peruvian Minister of Defense Walter Astudillo and Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmer Schialer stand on the steps of the Pentagon during a ceremony.

Schialer said that while Peru and the U.S. have a strategic relationship, Peru would like to upgrade it to a comprehensive or integral strategic relationship.

“The United States of America is one of a very, very important friend of ours, a very good ally, also a historic ally in many things,” he said.

## Exercise Obangame Express opens in Cabo Verde

from U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs

PRAIA, Cabo Verde - Obangame Express 2025 (OE 25), sponsored by U.S. Africa Command and conducted by U.S. Sixth Fleet, held the opening ceremony for the exercise May 5 in host nation Cabo Verde.

Obangame Express is one of three regional maritime exercises led by U.S. Sixth Fleet as part of a comprehensive strategy to provide collaborative opportunities to African forces and international partners to address maritime security concerns.

“Obangame Express is a cornerstone of our commitment to maritime security in West Africa. This exercise isn’t just about training; it’s about strengthening the enduring partnerships with

our African and international allies and collectively addressing the complex challenges to regional stability and prosperity,” said Vice Adm. J.T. Anderson, commander of Sixth Fleet. “The participation of 30 nations speaks volumes about the dedication to a secure and thriving maritime environment.”

This year is the 14th iteration of OE25. U.S. forces will work alongside 27 nations to improve combined maritime law enforce-

ment capacity, promote national and regional security in West Africa, and increase interoperability between the U.S., African, and multinational partners. Strong U.S.-African partnerships are crucial for peace and stability in the region and for defense of the homeland. The U.S. routinely exercises with our partners in Africa to build lethal and enduring relationships to ensure the safety and security of the regional maritime environment.

## Air Force begins ground testing for Collaborative Combat Aircraft

by **Master Sgt. Gustavo Castillo, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs**

ARLINGTON, Va. - The Department of the Air Force has begun ground testing for the Collaborative Combat Aircraft program, marking a major milestone in its effort to integrate autonomous systems into the future force.

This ground test phase includes rigorous evaluations of the YFQ-42A and YFQ-44A production representative test vehicles — developed by General Atomics and Anduril, respectively—focusing on propulsion systems, avionics, autonomy integration and ground control interfaces. These assessments will validate performance, inform future design decisions and prepare the systems for flight testing later this year.

“Starting ground tests is a key milestone for the CCA Increment 1 program,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David W. Allvin. “This phase bridges the gap between design and flight, reducing integration risks, boosting confidence and laying the groundwork for a successful first flight and eventual fielding to the warfighter.”

The CCA program is vital to the Air Force’s broader shift towards scalable force packages and human-machine teaming. Designed to operate alongside crewed aircraft, CCA will extend operational reach, enhance survivability and increase lethality in contested environments. As force multipliers, they will support rapid deployment and affordable mass — delivering combat power at a fraction of the cost of traditional fighters.



**A YFQ-44A production representative test vehicle is staged in a testing chamber at Costa Mesa, Calif. The YFQ-44A, developed by Anduril, is one of two production representative test vehicles which will be critical in securing air dominance for the Joint Force in future conflicts, leveraging autonomous capabilities and crewed-uncrewed teaming to defeat enemy threats in contested environments. Courtesy photo**

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# Career and Education

## SANDAG unveils May 15 'Bike Anywhere Day' 2025 Pit Stop map

*Participants Can Pedal to More Than 100 Pit Stops Across the Region on Thursday, May 15*

The SANDAG Bike Anywhere Day 2025 Pit Stop Map is now available to help participants plan their route for the annual event on Thursday, May 15, from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m.

For more than 30 years, SANDAG has hosted this regional event to celebrate National Bike Month in May to promote biking as a fun, sustainable, and healthy way to get around. In 2024, participants made more than 9,000 visits to pit stops across the San Diego region.

This year, eligible participants who register in advance will be automatically entered into the Bike Anywhere Day Sweepstakes for a chance to win one of three e-bikes, powered by Rad Power Bikes.

On Bike Anywhere Day, riders can explore more than 1,800 miles of bikeways throughout the region, from Oceanside to El Cajon and Tijuana. The SANDAG Bike Anywhere Day 2025 Pit Stop Map includes more than 100 locations, with expanded coverage reaching even more communities and including stops along newly completed bikeways.

Participants who register will receive a free t-shirt at a Bike Anywhere Day Pit stop on May 15. They will also be offered fun and engaging opportunities to take breaks with refreshments and snacks, while supplies last. Pit stop hosts include community organizations, local businesses, healthcare providers, schools, government agencies, and event sponsors.

In addition to Bike Anywhere Day, SANDAG is celebrating National Bike Month with free bike classes, group bike rides and activities, and promotions from local businesses for customers who arrive by bike.

View the San Diego Regional Bike Map online or pick up a free printed map at a pit stop on May 15. To register to participate in Bike Anywhere Day, visit [SANDAG.org/bikeday](https://SANDAG.org/bikeday). To learn more about Bike Month activities, visit [SANDAG.org/bikemonth](https://SANDAG.org/bikemonth).

### Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) Southwest

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## Navy Reserve Force officially 100% manned, advancing warfighting readiness and strategic depth

WASHINGTON - The Navy Reserve Force is officially 100 percent manned. Recently, the Reserve reached its authorized strength of 57,700 Sailors for Fiscal Year 2025, the first time since 2020, reinforcing the Navy's ability to project power, respond to global contingencies, and deliver warfighting capabilities across all domains.

The Navy Reserve provides operational surge capacity and specialized expertise across mission-critical domains including cyber defense, expeditionary logistics, medical response, shipyard surge maintenance, and aviation support. Maintaining a fully manned and ready Reserve Force ensures the Navy can respond decisively across any domain.

"Every Reserve billet filled is a warfighting advantage secured," said Vice Adm. Nancy Lacore, Chief of Navy Reserve. "From protecting our homeland to supporting missions abroad, our Reserve Sailors bring specialized experience, surge capacity, and mission-essential expertise to every fight."

The manning achievement reflects a coordinated effort that wouldn't be possible without Navy Recruiting Reserve Command (NRRC) and its five Reserve Talent Acquisition Groups: RTAG Central, Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and Southwest. Recruiters from these teams worked closely with communities across the country to bring in new talent

and help prior-service Sailors continue their Navy careers in the Reserve.

"Our recruiters are mission-driven and understand the bigger picture," said Capt. Todd Winn, Commodore of NRRC. "Every Sailor who joins or affiliates adds real capability to the Fleet. It's not just about filling quotas—it's about building a ready, lethal force."

NRRC used new tools and smarter outreach to match the right candidates with the right jobs—especially those with in-demand skills.

Retention was also a key part of the success, thanks to innovative policy changes, bonuses and incentives that helped keep skilled Sailors in uniform and in the fight. This dual focus on accession and retention helped ensure both quantity and quality across the force.

"We focused on both bringing people in and keeping our talent," said Winn. "That's how we build a strong, experienced force that's ready when the Navy needs us."

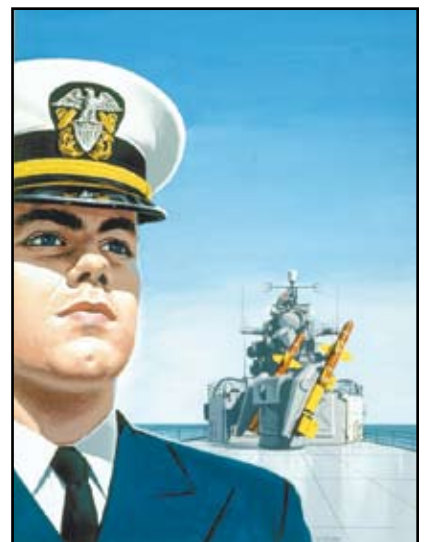
Looking ahead in FY-25, the Navy Reserve is continuing its focus on the Warfighter.

"Our Reserve Sailors are a strategic advantage, and they stand ready to respond, fight, and win wherever called," Lacore said.

Navy Reserve priorities in FY-25 include improving the Sailor experience, offering more flexibility for service, and attracting talent in high-demand fields like information warfare, unmanned systems, and space operations.

The mission of the Navy Reserve is to provide strategic depth and deliver operational capabilities to the Navy and Marine Corps team, and Joint forces, in the full range of military operations from peace to war.

It provides essential naval



**Navy historical recruiting art, "Officer, Missile on Launcher" by Harvey Simpson/Naval History and Heritage Command**

warfighting capabilities and expertise, strategically aligned with mission requirements — valued for warfighting readiness, innovation and agility.



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## Carl Vinson strike group remains in the Middle East

In an effort to have two carrier strike groups in the Middle East, the Department of Defense recently ordered the *Harry S. Truman* CSG to remain there for a short period.

According to news reports, the U.S. wants to maintain two carrier strike groups in the region to battle Yemen-based Houthi rebels.

In late March, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth extended the deployment of *Truman* and the warships in its group for a month as part of a campaign to increase strikes on the Iran-backed Houthis, according to the report.

The official said Hegseth signed the latest order May 1 and expected *Truman* and its strike group warships will head home to Virginia after about a week in the region.

Gen. Erik Kurilla, head of U.S. Central Command, requested that *Truman* be extended again, according to officials.

*Truman* has been deployed for more than seven months, departing Sept. 23, 2024, from Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The ship entered the Red Sea on Dec. 14 to defend against Houthi militant threats to shipping

in the strategic waterway. *Truman* and its strike group have been part of American forces striking more than 1,000 Houthi targets in Yemen as part of a campaign that began in March to stop attacks by the militants on the shipping lanes of the Red Sea.

Since March 15, strikes conducted by U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, have killed Houthi fighters and leaders and degraded their capabilities, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement to mark the first 100 days of the Defense Department during President Donald Trump's second administration.

Adm. Jim Kilby, the acting chief of naval operations, briefly touted *Truman*'s success in the Red Sea during a keynote speech week at the Modern Day Marine expo in Washington D.C.

"The *Harry S. Truman* strike group has been crushing it – crushing it. I want to make sure when they come back, they feel that pride in their work," Kilby said as he appeared to struggle to withhold tears.

## USNS Sojourner Truth christened as MSC's newest fleet replenishment oiler

SAN DIEGO — Military Sealift Command's newest fleet replenishment oiler USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210), was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego late last month.

The event was attended by Dr. Brett A. Seidle, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy; Vice Adm. John F. G. Wade, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet; Capt. Micah Murphy, commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific; executives and employees of NASSCO San Diego; and the decedents of Sojourner Truth.

The ship honors Sojourner Truth, and escaped slave who became an American abolitionist and activist for African-American civil rights, women's rights, and alcohol temperance.


"We reserve the naming of our ships for special places, historic events and great people who represent the best among us, and who's distinguished contributions are worthy of our remembrances for generations to come," said Seidel. "In that vein, Sojourner Truth was a natural choice to be memorialized with a ship bearing her name."

## Cruiser USS Cape St. George arrives in San Diego after modernization

SAN DIEGO - Guided-missile cruiser USS *Cape St. George* (CG 71) recently arrived to its new homeport here from Naval Base Everett, Wash., after conducting phased modernization at Vigor Shipyard in Seattle. This move was a permanent change of station for the crew and family members.

"I am so incredibly proud of this dedicated crew and for all of the hard work and sacrifice that brought Cape St. George back to life. Repairing and restoring systems after an extended modernization was a herculean effort, and this talented crew is the reason the ship was able to return to sea and reintegrate into our Navy's fighting force," said Capt. Jennifer Pontius, commanding officer of *Cape St. George*.

The cruiser began modifications in June 2021 and is scheduled to conclude in 2025.



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# Naval Base San Diego celebrates SAPR month with cakes, ponies

by Krishna Jackson  
Naval Base San Diego

Naval Base San Diego recognized last month's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) with multiple events at various locations around the base. The team kicked off the month with a cake baking contest and closed out the month with ponies.

"Our goal is to get people engaged in awareness and pre-

## 3 dead, search halted after suspected migrant smuggling boat crash off Del Mar: Officials

Local news sources reported May 6 that three people who were on a type of boat commonly used by smugglers were killed, including a child, and four others were injured. The Coast Guard announced May 5 that it had suspended its search for seven missing people.

While not all the passengers have been identified, sources close to the investigation say the captain and co-captain were both arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection on suspicion of human smuggling.

At around 6:30 a.m. on May 5, a boat overturned just north of Torrey Pines State Beach with an estimated 18 people on board, according to Encinitas Deputy Fire Chief Jorge Sanchez.

It's unclear where the boat was coming from, the U.S. Coast Guard said.

"It is a suspected migrant smuggling boat — human smuggling, no drugs — the ones coming up from south of the border," Petty Officer Chris Sappey, a Coast Guard spokesperson, told NBC News, adding that at least two of those on board were children.

Reports from the scene indicated that the bodies of three people had washed ashore. Chuck Westerheide, a spokesman who works with the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office, confirmed that all three of the victims were male.

vention," said Jenna Pinkham, NBSD supervisory sexual assault response coordinator, about the goal of hosting events focused on SAPR.

A total of four events took place, including the 5th annual Challenge of the Galleys cake baking competition, Strike Out Sexual Assault bowling competition, SAPR month special meal on and, the last, on April 29, Ponies for Pre-

vention therapy mini-horse engagement.

"My favorite event has to be this event [Ponies for Prevention], you can't go wrong with therapy ponies," said NBSD Master at Arms 1st Class Samantha Collura of Miami, Fla. Collura has served as a unit victim advocate (UVA) since 2021 in addition to her position as a military working dog handler.

"Being a voice for somebody who may not be able to be a voice for themselves is important," said Collura.

"Today [April 4th] is about generating conversation and awareness about sexual assault and its effects on victims, survivors, our community and our society as a whole," said Pinkham at Challenge of the Galleys.

Pinkham leads a team of qualified civilian and military UVAs providing 24/7 intervention services for individuals, service members and their age

eligible dependents who have experienced sexual assault. Some of these UVAs volunteered to support these events and many were recognized for their contributions to victim advocacy.

Collura and other UVAs from the base, USS *Boxer* (LHD 4), USS *Essex* (LHD 2), USS *Germantown* (LSD 42),



A Sailor at Naval Base San Diego interacts with therapy miniature horses at a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response event called Ponies for Prevention April 29. U. S. Navy photo by IT2 Ulrika Mendiola

USS *Lake Erie* (CG 70) and USS *Makin Island* (LHD 8) were presented awards for their excellence in support

"These individuals have gone above and beyond their role," said NBSD Command Master Chief Kristopher Freyberg.

A team from the base Transient Personnel Unit won the baking competition, USS *Essex*



won the bowling competition and everyone won, who participated in the special meal and/or spent time with a miniature therapy horse.

"Sexual assault awareness and response requires every-

one's participation. We each have a role to play, and the fight is year-round," said Freyberg.

If you need help please call 1-877-995-5247 or visit <https://shlhotlines.safeline.org/> online.

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# NIWC Pacific boosts Navy’s next-gen ocean observation

**from NIWC Pacific**  
Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific is riding a wave of success with its Next Generation Ocean Data Ingest (NGODI) program, an initiative poised to revolutionize the U.S. Navy’s ocean data collection capabilities. “NGODI will improve the Navy’s understanding of the maritime domain,” said Jeffrey Ellen, research scientist at the NIWC Pacific Basic and Applied Research Division. “This technology will provide an unprecedented level of awareness, enhancing our ability to monitor vast bodies of water and detect vessels, aircraft, and marine life within them.”

Building on the foundation developed by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency’s (DARPA) Ocean of Things (OoT) program from fiscal years 2017-2022, NGODI was funded by the Office of Naval Research (Code 322) from fiscal years 2023- 2025. The program leverages years of research and development in edge processing algorithms, machine learning, and cloud computing to deploy a cost-effective, scalable network of adaptable sensors, according to Ellen. These sensors gather critical data for a range of applications across meteorology

and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The program is currently transitioning to the Naval Oceanographic Office at John C. Stennis Space Center, Miss., with the Naval Research Laboratory and Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division partnering on the project.

NGODI’s effectiveness has already been demonstrated in five recent exercises, including operations with the 5th Fleet’s Task Force 59 and smaller deployments with Navy and Marine Corps commands. The sensors have proven particularly adept at vessel detection and tracking.

The network relies on compact, basketball-sized sensor units designed for autonomous operation for up to a year. These units transmit data via satellite to a central command center, and their bidirectional communication capabilities allow the Navy to remotely adjust priorities and duty cycles, according to Ellen.

“This distributed approach provides comprehensive coverage of areas between traditional, high-cost sensors like Navy ships and hydrophone arrays, offering a more cost-effective and enduring solution than sonobuoys,” he said.

Each unit houses a diverse array of sensors, including environmental sensors for measuring temperature, pressure, and wave patterns, as well as specialized sensors for detecting underwater acoustics, radio frequencies, and even magnetic anomalies.

NIWC Pacific recently unveiled the next phase of NGODI – the Attributable Cost Effective Lagrangian Ocean Observation Platform (ACELOOP) – presented as a Pre-Solicitation Collaboration opportunity during a recent Information Warfare Research Project (IWRP) Consortium Quarterly Industry Day.

Using an Other Transaction Authority – a special authority granted by Congress that allows the Department of Defense to streamline agreements with non-traditional defense contractors and academic institutions – the

planned ACELOOP IWRP effort will fast-track the development and delivery of a prototype batch of 10 to more than 100 updated sensor units, according to Ellen.

“The planned ACELOOP IWRP phase is a crucial step towards realizing the full potential of NGODI,” he said. “We anticipate future funding will allow us to scale production to thousands of units, creating a robust and adaptable network.”

This next generation network promises to significantly enhance the Navy’s ability to monitor and understand the vast ocean environment, solidifying NIWC Pacific’s commitment to delivering cutting-edge solutions for the Navy’s most critical challenges and further securing our nation’s most vital waterways.

## Navy awards contract modification for two additional Virginia-class submarines

Naval Sea Systems Command awarded a two-ship contract modification on the existing Virginia-class submarine Block V contract to General Dynamics Electric Boat for the construction of two FY 2024 submarines.

The award signals the Navy’s

commitment to maintaining its warfighting advantage in the undersea domain and continues the Virginia-class’s teaming arrangement between prime contractor GDEB in Groton, Conn., and the major subcontractor Huntington Ingalls Shipbuilding, Newport News in Newport News, Va. To date, the Navy has taken delivery of 24 Virginia-class subs, with an additional 16 now under contract.

“We recently re-negotiated the planned contract to deliver this critical capability, and appropriately share risk between the Navy and industry,” said Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan. “We will be looking at all future contracts with a similar lens to ensure the appropriate level of risk sharing and value to the American taxpayer.”

Contract modifications were also awarded to both GDEB and HII-NNS, to increase workforce support and investment across nuclear shipbuilding programs.

“By investing in the nuclear shipbuilding workforce—which is a national strategic asset—we are working with our industry partners to deliver on this most critical future requirement,” said Dr. Brett Seidle, acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development & Acquisition.

“The contract award is the result of a highly coordinated contracting effort across the nuclear shipbuilding enterprise, to promote stability at critical suppliers as the submarine industrial base ramps up to meet a historic increase in demand for submarine production,” said Program Executive Officer, Attack Submarines, Rear Adm. Jon Rucker.

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/display-news/Article/4170873/>

## LOCAL MILITARY IMAGES



**PATRIOTIC PROMOTION**  
Army Col. Jeffrey S. Palazzini administers the oath of office to 1st Lt. Spencer J. Myers during a ceremony to promote Myers to the rank of captain in Pacific Palisades, Calif., May 1, 2025. Fellow members of the Army Corps of Engineers Emergency Field Office-Palisades Fire recognized Myers for his leadership and dedication to the Los Angeles wildfire debris removal mission. Courtesy photo



**MASK UP**  
Aviation Boatswain Mate (Fuel) 3rd Class Victor Yalung, from Dededo, Guam, conducts a fit test on a chemical biological and radiological defense (CBR-D) M50 gas mask aboard amphibious assault carrier USS Tripoli (LHA 7), May 5, 2025. Tripoli is an America-class amphibious assault ship homeported in San Diego. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Paul LeClair



**MCAS MIRAMAR (May 2, 2025)** Marines with aircraft rescue and firefighting and Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Miramar members are shown during a NMCRS volunteer recognition ceremony here. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Seferino Gamez

## Why Do Servicemembers Resist Getting Help for their Addiction? Because We Train Them To

by Jay Wylie

As a 22-year Naval Veteran, and much of it spent in command of a warship, believe me, I understand what it means to put your own needs below the needs of your company, your mission, and your country.

The “warrior ethos” that is ingrained into all of us during basic training and then throughout our years of service rewards sacrifice.

But what if this warrior ethos causes us to make decisions that unknowingly endanger our company, our families, and our country? This is the case when it comes to the sinister and baffling disease of addiction.

Addiction, once considered a moral failing, is now universally recognized as medical condition that is treatable, just like diabetes or hypertension.

Addiction is progressive, and only gets worse when it does not receive the treatment it needs. The shame and stigma associated with struggling with a substance abuse problem is based on outdated beliefs about willpower. Unfortunately, the structure of the military and its emphasis on discipline heightens the stigma for a vulnerable population of young people who are coping with extreme stress and highly traumatic events.

It’s a recipe for addiction, and it’s simple math that between 10 and 20% of our nation’s servicemembers will struggle with substance use at some point.

### Help is Available (and No One Has to Know)

The outpatient drug rehab program that I work for, Confidential Recovery, just celebrated 10 years of helping men and women get sober and stay that way in San Diego, and many of those

people are, like myself, veterans.

Just this year we got clearance to accept TRICARE insurance and treat active-duty military members and their families. It was a logical step given our program’s excellent track record with veterans.

Active-duty service members can contact Confidential Recovery directly, and their privacy is protected by HIPAA laws, so they do not have to disclose their drug treatment to the military (note: there are potential exceptions to this, contact Confidential Recovery, or visit the Confidential Recovery website for the full disclosure).

### What is Outpatient Drug Rehab Really Like?

Outpatient drug & alcohol rehabilitation is a manageable commitment that fits in with most people’s schedule. It’s 3 days per week, and 3 hours per session, for a total of 9 hours per week.

Confidential Recovery utilizes a “social model,” which features group therapy, but includes individual counseling as well. Confidential Recovery offers day & night meetings, including weekends, and some sessions can be attended remotely (via Telehealth).

### What if I Want More Info or to Get Started?

To get more information or to get started with treatment, contact Confidential Recovery directly at (619) 452-1200 for a private and complimentary assessment of your situation. It may expedite the process to have your TRICARE details ready. For more information you can visit the Confidential Recovery website at: <https://www.confidentialrecovery.com/>



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## The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by  
Lisa  
Smith  
Molinari

“C’m on guys!” I bellowed, “You’re late!” One by one, they appeared at the kitchen table in our Naval Station Mayport base house, each carrying a heavy attitude.

My husband, Francis, slumped into a chair. He’d always thought my nicey-nicey family meetings were pure nonsense, a waste of his Sunday leisure time. When he grew up, you did what your parents told you to do, or you’d be wearing five faster than you could say “Child Protective Services.” However, Francis had left me in charge so often during Navy deployments and work travel, he knew it was best to go along with my parenting schemes, harebrained or not.

I’d been holding periodic family meetings since the kids were too young to read my typed agendas, believing they were necessary to maintain order, and my sanity. Although no stranger to corporal punishment, I was afraid of turning our kids into axe murders, heroine junkies, or worst of all, adults with low self-esteem. I believed I could achieve total cooperation by simply telling the kids what we wanted them to do. Makes perfect sense, right?

Lilly, 12, and Anna, 14, arrived in a sock-sliding race for the best seat, the elder sister grabbing the prime spot. The last to arrive, thudding down the stairs, was Hayden, 17, who would’ve preferred an insurance seminar to a conversation with family during which feelings

## The family meeting

might be discussed.

With everyone seated, I played upon their worst fears. “Okay, everyone, let’s hold hands and say what we love about each other.”

I allowed an uncomfortable silence, then, just when mutiny was imminent, I blurted, “Gotcha!” My comedic genius softened them up, exactly what I needed for my plan to take hold. Clearing my throat, I began.

“Summer break is coming, but you still need to manage your time properly so you do well this school year. We expect ...” I went on, and on, about bedtimes, homework, chores, allowance, privileges, personal hygiene, and manners.

About forty minutes into the lecture, I was losing them, an eventuality for which I was prepared.

“In conclusion, to help you manage your time, here’s a little gift.”

The girls squealed with delight when I revealed three new sports watches, with digital displays, dual alarms, ten-lap memory chrono, and water resistance to one-hundred meters—whatever all that means. I sat back, smug with satisfaction and thought, “Rules will be followed. Order is restored. No punishments necessary. I look like Mother Theresa. My plan is complete.”

“I’m not wearing this,” Hayden interjected.

“Listen Honey,” I responded, “you’re almost a man now—you should learn how to use a watch.”

“I’m not putting this stupid hunk of plastic on my wrist—there are clocks everywhere.”

I can’t be sure, but I believe

smoke emanated from my ears.

It may have been Hayden’s utter lack of appreciation, his complete disregard for authority, my unrealistic desire for total obedience, or that my underwear was riding up that afternoon, but I saw red. “Listen to me, young man,” I said through gritted teeth, “you WILL wear that watch, you understand me?”

“NO.”

The next twenty minutes were a bit foggy, but I clearly recalled Francis storming off down the street, and Hayden throwing the watch at the wall while screaming a particular expletive he’d previously not uttered in our presence. Then, I vaguely remembered flying upstairs without touching the ground and lifting Hayden’s door off the hinges with superhuman strength.

Cooling off in our garage, I felt an immediate sense of regret. “The boy IS seventeen,” I thought, “he probably sees that watch as a shackle. I need to let him make his own choices.

I walked into the house, just as Hayden was coming out to find me. Our eyes met, communicating our mutual regret without words.

“Where’d that watch go, Mom? I could give it a try.”

“I’ll help you find it, but ... I was thinking, you could just carry it in your pocket. Or, you don’t have to wear it at all.” We smiled at each other, realizing how silly we’d been.

Just as I found the watch broken in the corner, Francis arrived home refreshed from his afternoon walk, and asked, “So ... what’s for dinner?”

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## Tonies — A fun, screen-free & educational audio player for kids, plus Lego competes in Formula One

This week’s “AutoMatters & More” column is for kids — and the kids in all of us. First we’ll have a look at Tonies, and then let’s go Formula One racing with Lego.

Tonies — screen-free, educational fun for kids: I had never heard of Tonies until I saw a display of them a few months ago. Intrigued, I asked a parent of a young child if they had ever heard of Tonies? They told me that of course they knew of Tonies, and thought very highly of them as a fun, educational alternative to screen time.

I realized that, if for no other reason than as a responsible grandparent, I needed to find out for myself just what Tonies are. I contacted the company and requested some samples, which they send to me.

While the Toniebox itself is simple to use, even for children as young as three-years-old (appropriate ages vary by Tomie, and can be seen on the Tonies website and on packages of individual Tonies), someone who knows their way around computers needs to do the initial setup and any desired customization.

You’ll need a Toniebox and charger, a Tonie (one comes with the Toniebox) or a Creative-Tonie; a computer, smartphone or tablet; and a Wi-Fi connection. The initial setup, which is described in the instruction pamphlet that is included with the Toniebox, explains how to pair the Toniebox with your wireless network. You will need to put the Toniebox on the charger base. Each new Tonie initially needs to have its content downloaded from the Internet. You’ll manage the collection of Tonies and do more through the Tonies app.

There is a wide variety of content on Tonies, so kids will want to build a collection. Some are for kids as young as three years old. I received a selection that included Tonies labelled as Audio Play, Music, Audiobook and one labelled as Creative-Tomie, for which you can record your own audio content. Age ranges are 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8. Genres are Story Time, Sing & Dance, Adventure, Wellness, Listen & Learn and Sleep.

Brands include Tonies Originals, Disney, Pixar, PBS Kids, Dreamworks, National Geographic Kids, PAW Patrol and Peppa Pig.

The authors are Dr. Seuss, Julia Donaldson and Roald Dahl.

**AutoMatters™ & More**



by Jan Wagner

Tonies are fun for kids to play with. To change audio tracks, kids simply need to whack either of the two sides of the Toniebox. Out of the box, the volume can be increased by squeezing and then releasing the right ear. The volume can similarly be decreased by squeezing and then releasing the left ear.

Tonies are widely available at favorite retailers. In addition, this week on the Tonies website, Tonies is making it easier for you to check out Tonies for yourself, as they invite you to “Celebrate Screen-Free Week with tonies® and save 15% on select items. The perfect way to spark imagination and bring the family together!” Another one already caught my attention: the Lightning McQueen Tonie (ages 3-5) for \$16.99.

To learn more about Tonies, visit the Tonies Official U.S. Site at: <https://us.tonies.com/>.

Lego drivers’ parade at the Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix 2025: Toys captivated the fans, race teams, track workers and press as ten life-sized, motorized Lego Formula One cars — one per race team, each containing both drivers — were used instead of a flat-bed truck for the customary driver’s parade pace lap, shortly before the start of the Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix 2025.

It was an amazing sight. Of course, even though the cars could only do about 20mph, race drivers being race drivers could not help themselves but be competitive and occasionally collide with each other, leaving Lego debris around the track in their wake.

I really hope that Lego will exhibit one of the cars each (after they repair their crash damage!), as well as display boards showing photos of ALL of the cars in the parade, on display at some of the busiest Lego stores around the world (including the Lego store in Downtown Disney at Disneyland Park), as well as at Legoland in San Diego.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit “AutoMatters & More” at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue ‘years’ boxes and browse. Copyright © 2025 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #881

## Veterans News

### FRA board brings joy and advocacy to VA psych ward

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) board members recently spent a meaningful day volunteering at a VA medical inpatient psych ward, strengthening their connection to the veterans they serve.

The group played a variety of games—Nintendo Wii bowling, checkers, card games, and other board games—creating an atmosphere of fun and engagement. Laughter and friendly competition filled the air as veterans and FRA members bonded over strikes, strategies, and shared stories.

The day wasn’t just about games. The FRA team shared lunch with the patients and staff, sparking conversations and lighthearted jokes that lifted everyone’s spirits.

The camaraderie was pal-

pable, and for the veterans, it was a welcome break

Seeing the veterans’ smiles and hearing their



from their daily routines, reminding them they’re not forgotten.

As advocates for veterans and active-duty personnel, the FRA’s mission goes beyond policy papers and Capitol Hill. This hands-on experience gave the board a front-row seat to the real impact of FRA legislative and volunteer work.

concerns firsthand brought new depth to the association’s advocacy efforts. The team took time to chat with staff and patients, gaining insights into the challenges facing the psyche ward and the broader VA system.

With some VA units potentially facing cuts, the FRA board didn’t just leave with warm memories but

ways to support the unit through donations and legislative action.

These discussions highlighted the importance of protecting specialty programs that serve vulnerable veterans. The experience sharpened the legislative team’s understanding of VA programs, equipping them to craft more effective policies and provide informed advice to Congress.

For the FRA, this visit was a powerful reminder of why they do what they do. It bridged the gap between abstract regulations and the people they affect, reinforcing their commitment to veterans’ well-being.

Moving forward, the association pledges to keep pushing for the resources and support these heroes deserve—one game, one conversation, and one policy at a time.



**Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sgt. (Ret.) Ronald Pohle, left, poses for a photo with Col. (Ret.) George Newton during Newton’s birthday celebration at the Silvergate Assisted Living Center here. The center hosted a surprise celebration for Newton’s 100th birthday with over 20 active duty and retired Marines. Newton is a World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veteran. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jacqueline Akamelu**





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— F. Scott Fitzgerald

### HELP - VOLUNTEER

**USO** Volunteers are the heart of the USO — become one today! Join our team and support local military service members and their families in your community. <https://www.uso.org/take-action/volunteer>

**USS Midway Museum** is recruiting volunteers for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety. [www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/](http://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/)

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Email Jessica at  
[jessica@socalprem.com](mailto:jessica@socalprem.com)  
to schedule a tour

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**NATIONAL CITY** — 2BR/2BA fully furnished, W/D included. Minutes from 32nd St. & downtown. No smoking/drugs/pets. \$2400/mo. \$150 off 1st months rent. 619-646-1412.

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(760) 286-8880  
Open 7 days a week 9am-7pm  
Sales support veterans & their families

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
Dial 988 then PRESS 1

## SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

### Can I avoid paying the Medicare premium?

*Dear Rusty: Is there any way I can get out of paying the \$185 I am told will be taken out of my Social Security for Medicare Part B when I turn 65? We pay for Medicare all our working lives, and now I have to pay a monthly premium for insurance that only covers 80%.*

*Signed: Disheartened Senior*

**Dear Disheartened:** For clarification, the money you paid into Medicare while working during your lifetime was for Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage). The Medicare taxes paid while working entitled you to FREE Medicare coverage for Part A inpatient hospitalization coverage, but they do not entitle you to Medicare coverage for outpatient services (coverage for doctors, medical tests, etc.). For that coverage from Medicare, you must enroll in Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium (\$185/month for 2025). If you wish to have Medicare Part B coverage, you must enroll in Medicare Part B at age 65 - unless you have other "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer.

The Medicare Part B premium will be automatically deducted from your Social Security payment when you enroll in Medicare, and there is no way to avoid it if you wish to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient medical services. But, if you currently have "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer, you can delay enrolling in Medicare Part B (thus avoiding the premium) until your employer coverage ends. If you don't enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period (at 65), or in a Special Enrollment Period following the end of your creditable employer healthcare coverage, then you will incur a penalty for enrolling in Medicare Part B outside of the prescribed enrollment periods. That penalty is a permanent increase in your Medicare Part B premium. FYI, "creditable" is an employer group plan with at least 20 participants.

We do not advise going without outpatient healthcare coverage, so you should carefully consider enrolling in Medicare Part B when you turn 65. If you are already collecting Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled, but you can opt out of Part B if you wish — it's just not advisable, unless you have current creditable healthcare coverage from an employer.

So, to recap: the Medicare taxes you paid while working only entitled you to free Medicare Part A inpatient hospitalization coverage. You must enroll in Medicare Part B (for which there is a monthly premium) to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient healthcare services. Both Medicare Part A and Part B have deductibles and copayments, for which you may wish to consider getting either a supplemental insurance plan or a Medicare Advantage plan. But, in either case, you must still have both Medicare Part A and Part B to obtain such additional healthcare coverage.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).*

## MOVIES AT THE BASES

**MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE DAY-OF TO MAKE SURE THE TITLE AND TIME ARE STILL CORRECT...**

<https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/> select movies at dropdown menu on left  
<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies>  
<https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

**NBSD and Lowry Theater Policy**

- Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.
- These Theaters are cashless facilities. Debit and credit cards accepted only.

### Premium Offerings

- Audiovisual assistive equipment available to customers at the front counter.
- Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.

### Movie Rating System

G — General audiences ALL ages admitted.

PG — Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.

PG-13 — Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

R — Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.



## Visit our military museums

**The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park.** The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. <http://www.veteranmuseum.org/>

Active duty military, Museum Member, Children under 12: Free  
Veterans/Seniors: \$4 • Adults: \$5 • Student ID: \$2  
2115 Park Blvd, San Diego (Balboa Park) • (619) 239-2300  
Hours: Call for current hours (619) 239-2300

**MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society.** Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>  
Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.

1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426.  
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

**USS Midway Museum.** The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal.  
FREE for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult \$39 (ages 13+). Youth \$26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$26\*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

**The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton.** Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: [MCBCAMPEN\\_history@usmc.mil](mailto:MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil) or phone (760)725-5758 The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: [www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/](http://www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/) for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm

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\$400/MONTH

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Southern California Horseshoe Pitchers Association (SCHPA)  
Welcomes all levels of pitchers!  
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<https://socalhorseshoes.weebly.com/>

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### VOLUNTEER

**BECOME A USO VOLUNTEER**

Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Help improve the quality of life of service members & boost their morale.  
<https://volunteers.uso.org>



Dial **988** then **PRESS 1**



Mayo Clinic Q and A

Are energy drinks bad for your health?

Mayo Clinic Staff

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: My husband and son are constantly coming home with an energy drink in hand. I tell them that they are bad for you, but I don't know enough to make a strong case. What are the effects of energy drinks on the body?

ANSWER: Energy drinks are a multibillion-dollar industry and are the most consumed supplement not under the control of the Food and Drug Administration other than multivitamins. It's a bit like the "Wild West" in the sense that energy drinks and their stimulating ingredients are under no FDA regulation and are not classified as a food or a drug but as a supplement.

Energy drinks contain ingredients such as caffeine, taurine and guarana that affect the heart, the heart's electrical system and the heart's muscular pump. When our bodies react to these chemicals, the heart rate and blood pressure can change. The heart's recharging of the electrical system can be affected by these chemicals. For most people with a healthy heart, the consumption of an energy drink would have no serious impact on our health. However, if you have a genetic heart condition that predisposes you to sudden cardiac death, exposure to an energy drink may not be as harmless.

People with underlying genetic heart disease or adults with coronary artery disease or

For the 199 out of 200 people who have a healthy heart and who do not have a genetic heart disease, energy drink consumption in moderation is safe.

weaker heart pumps can be more vulnerable to the chemicals in energy drinks. About one in 200 people have a sudden death-predisposing genetic heart disease, including hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, long QT syndrome, arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy and catecholaminergic polymorphic ventricular tachycardia. A healthy heart can handle caffeine in moderation, but a fragile heart may not be able to.

Consuming up to 400 mg of caffeine a day is safe for most adults — some energy drinks contain over half this amount in a single can. Depending on the age of your son, he may need to stay under 100 mg of caffeine per day, which is the recommended amount for adolescents ages 12-18.

In addition to heart risk, studies have suggested an increased risk of stroke with energy drink consumption. Long-term exposure to these substances over time affects how the blood vessels and heart react to the chemicals. Our blood vessels that control our blood pressure

are reacting to these chemicals, and the potential reason behind stroke risk is the tightening of our blood vessels.

For the 199 out of 200 people who have a healthy heart and who do not have a genetic heart disease, energy drink consumption in moderation is safe. However, you might want to ask yourself: Can you go three days without it? If not, you may be experiencing some dependency on the chemicals in the energy drink. Heavy caffeine consumption can cause physical and psychological dependence, restlessness and insomnia.

Overall, there is very little health value to energy drinks. Listen to your body — Are they making you feel shaky or causing you to experience withdrawals? Can you be satisfied with your morning coffee or tea instead?

There is a lot of room for future research on these beverages. Consuming the wrong thing at the wrong time in the wrong person is a setup for the perfect storm. Caffeine may also interact with a person's medications. Tell your healthcare team that you are consuming energy drinks and the unregulated supplements they contain, and you can decide together what the right choice is for you.

— Michael Ackerman, M.D., Ph.D., Cardiovascular Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota



Oceanside Chamber invites military and community to celebrate Armed Forces Day on May 17 at annual pier-side event

Oceanside is gearing up for its annual Armed Forces Day Operation Appreciation. Created by the Chamber of Commerce in 2002, Operation appreciation is a heartfelt event dedicated to honoring and celebrating our military's brave men and women.

On Saturday, May 17, 2025, the Oceanside Chamber will bring the community together to provide a day of recognition for active-duty military stationed on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and nearby military bases.

Thousands of active-duty military and their families will be treated to a day of free food, entertainment, and a fun zone for kids. This event will be held at the Junior Seau Pier Amphitheater. Free parking is available in both the Civic Center Parking Structure and the Transit Center parking structure.

The fun begins at 11am with an opening ceremony and lasts until 4pm. Numerous dignitaries including Congressman Mike Levin, Assemblymember Laurie Davies, Supervisor Jim Desmond

Free fun-zone and food for active duty military with ID!

and Mayor Esther Sanchez are expected to take the stage to welcome the servicemembers. The day features a variety of activities, including a children's fun zone, live music, and free food provided exclusively for active-duty military

members and their families. Our major food and beverage sponsors include Buffalo Wild Wings, Pick Up Stix, Jersey Mikes, Frazier Farms, Ocean's Eleven Casino, and Urbane Cafe.

All Active-duty military and their dependents must bring an Active-duty military ID Card for fun zone activities and a free lunch. This event is open to the public, and food and fun zone tickets are available for purchase.



Plan now for a San Diego County Fair adventure coming June 11-July 6

Established in 1880, the San Diego County Fair now welcomes nearly one million guests each summer, making it the county's largest and longest-running annual event. The 2025 Fair will open June 11 through July 6, closed Mondays and Tuesdays, for a 20-day season. This year's theme celebrates pets and pet ownership—"Summer Pet-tacular!" The fair is cashless so bring a credit or debit card. There are cash to credit card machines available for a fee. Save money on admission by purchasing tickets in advance online. For more information, visit sdfair.com

NO ONE FIGHTS ALONE

Your Mental Health Matters.

Visit the MHS Mental Health Hub for support. [health.mil/mentalhealth](https://health.mil/mentalhealth)

MHS Military Health System [health.mil](https://health.mil)

MAY 8, 2025 [www.armedforcesdispatch.com](https://www.armedforcesdispatch.com) 11



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